

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

We write to express our continued concern about the lack of a coherent strategy from the Trump Administration to address the root causes forcing citizens from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to flee their homelands and migrate to the United States. At a time when we are witnessing an increasing number of parents and children risking and losing their lives to seek safety, it is imperative that the Trump Administration act swiftly and responsibly. Additionally, nearly four months after President Trump announced the suspension of United States foreign assistance to these three countries, we have yet to receive information on how the Administration intends to tackle the high levels of violence, instability, and hardship that force these individuals to embark on the dangerous journey to the United States.

As you know, the purpose of U.S. national security funding for El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala is to protect the United States and its citizens and advance American interests, including supporting efforts to mitigate the factors driving irregular migration. This assistance supports joint law enforcement programs between the U.S. State Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to combat drug trafficking, as well as State Department-supported efforts by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and police forces in these three countries to combat violent gangs.¹ In this context, we are deeply concerned that, by suspending at least \$370 million in foreign assistance to Central America without an effective strategy to replace the efforts supported by this funding, President Trump is undermining our national security and curtailing efforts to stop drug trafficking, fight criminal organizations, and keep American citizens safe.

U.S. foreign assistance to Central America also plays an important role in supporting communities affected by violence, strengthening judicial systems, defending human rights, promoting accountability, improving governance, reducing corruption, and advancing economic reforms. These initiatives have enjoyed bipartisan consensus since their inception because they work to improve conditions in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, empowering citizens of

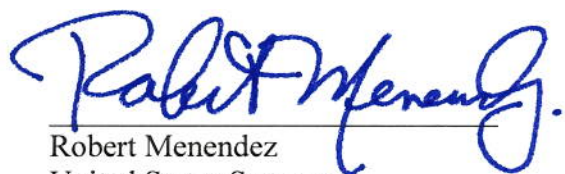
¹ See, e.g., Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Anti-Gang Initiatives*, available at <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/violent-crime/gangs>

those countries to find safety and economic opportunities at home, rather than being pressured to migrate to the United States. In fact, the Trump Administration had acknowledged the effectiveness of these programs and in nine different reports sent to Congress, the State Department certified that certain benchmarks were being met. To that end, we remain deeply troubled by the President's actions, which will likely exacerbate conditions in Central America and increase irregular migration from these countries to the United States.

In May of this year, a group of 35 Democratic Senators reintroduced the Central America Reform and Enforcement Act², which supports smart, effective, and humane border security approaches, provides a fair and legal process for children and families seeking asylum, and continues funding to address the root causes of violence and poverty in Central America. It is undeniable that, instead of using threats and forceful tactics against our neighbors, any effective plan to address irregular migration must include a strategy to tackle the root causes that are forcing individuals to flee in the first place.

It is critical that the Trump administration adopt a responsible and humane approach toward addressing this crisis. We urge you to work with Congress to present a real plan that addresses this situation in a timely manner.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



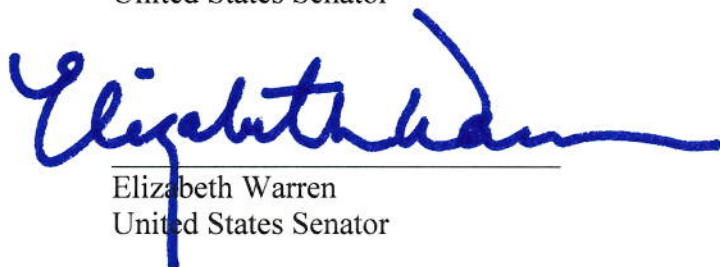
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



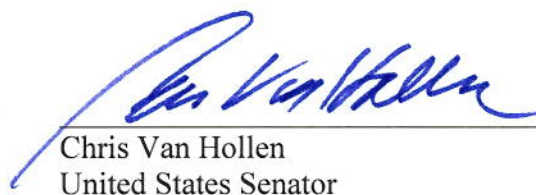
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator




Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

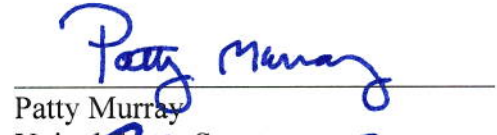


Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

² See, e.g., S. 1445—Central America Reform and Enforcement Act.



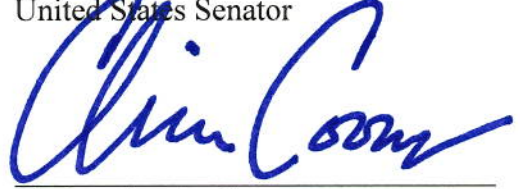
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



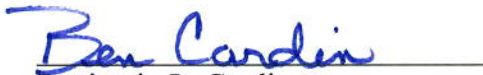
Patty Murray
United States Senator



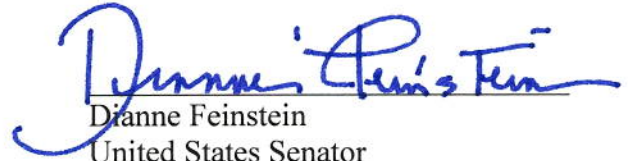
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



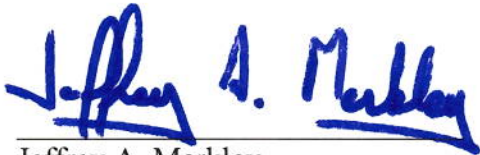
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator




Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



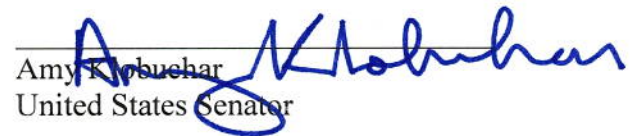
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



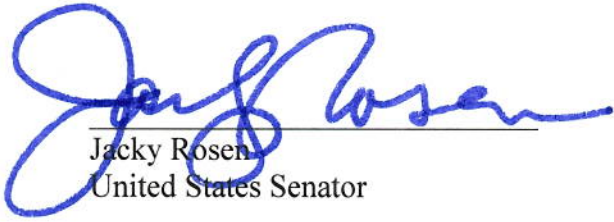
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



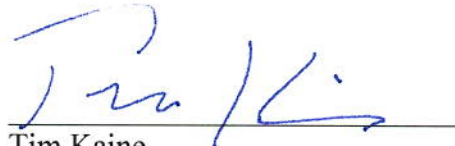
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



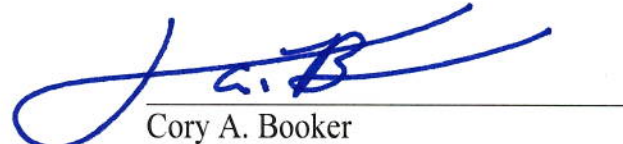
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

CC:
The Honorable Kimberly Breier
Assistant Secretary of State
Western Hemisphere Affairs